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RURAL LIBRARY SERVICE

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FARMERS' BULLETIN NO. 1847

RURAL PEOPLE, like others, want to use good books for many reasons—to learn to do better what they are already doing, to learn new things, to follow current events intelligently, to find relaxation, or to develop their understanding generally. Through books they can and do accomplish all these aims.

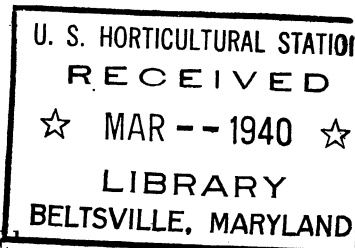
Rural schools need many more books than they can afford to buy in order to supplement modern methods of teaching and to interest and stimulate the pupils.

Many agencies among the people are helping to make public-library service available in various ways to rural people and rural schools. Little branch collections of books that are changed from time to time by volumes sent out from the county library headquarters sometimes do the work. To other places a librarian comes with a book automobile at stated times, lending books to country people, answering their questions, and helping them to make good selections.

But nearly 39 million rural Americans still lack public-library service of any kind. Believing that access to good reading materials is essential to rural progress, the Bureau of Agricultural Economics asked the American Library Association to cooperate in the preparation of this bulletin, which describes some of the rural library services now at work and suggests how rural communities and farm families who are without such services can help to get them for their people.

This bulletin supersedes Farmers' Bulletin No. 1559, Rural Libraries.

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RURAL LIBRARY SERVICE

Prepared in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics

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N EIGHBORS, both old and young, take to the new books in the little mountain cabin as ducks take to a pond. It is the first time they have ever had library service near at hand. A friendly mountaineer uses his living room as a station for books that come by book automobile from the central library at the county seat. Young men out of work, older people living with their children, young couples just starting out, men and women trying to fill gaps in their early education or to keep abreast of the rapidly changing economic and social scene—all these look upon this new library collection as the best thing that has ever come to this hilly country far from the main highway.

If one family were to buy all the books that moved across this man's table, it would soon be too much for them. But by a pooling of resources, many families living in the same district can be brought within reach of thousands of books and magazines. For the public library is, after all, just another cooperative service.

HOW RURAL PEOPLE USE LIBRARY BOOKS

These neighbors as well as other rural people turn to books for many reasons. Some are looking for specific information on cooperative marketing, building chicken houses, caring for babies, or repairing tractors. Some seek in books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers, an understanding of the current social, economic, and governmental problems which vitally affect the life of every individual. Wise folks look for the backgrounds of current problems in the pages of history and in the biographies of great leaders. A few

¹ The cover photograph is by Lewis Hine.

find inspiration in great poetry and prose. Others see distant lands through books of travel. Many turn to good stories for entertainment and relaxation.

New needs for printed materials are being created by the programs of the agricultural extension service, by radio book clubs, and other educational broadcasts. Farmers' bulletins, pamphlets on current issues, and farm journals meet these needs in part, but they often point to books for further information.

Thus this remote man of the hills has handed out books on subjects ranging all the way from lives of great men and world affairs to guides to practical farm problems and methods of making money through some new vocational effort.

RURAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

Rural forums to discuss social change and farm problems, being organized in many parts of the country, are creating an additional need for reading materials in the country. Many of these discussion groups have been organized by the United States Department of Agriculture, while others have sprung up independently (fig. 1). These discussions introduce a subject, but books as well as bulletins are needed to drive the points home. "Reciprocal trade agreements as they affect the farmer," or "Crop insurance," for instance, are more clearly understood when the discussion is followed up with reading.

Long-distance service is used in some communities where farm families have no local library service. The farmers or their families write to State library agencies at their State capitals and have books mailed to them. In Minnesota specially selected books are lent by the library division of the Minnesota State Department of Education to rural discussion groups in 20 counties.

In Wisconsin, to take another example, a farmer can write to the Wisconsin Free Library Commission in Madison and receive up-to-date volumes on discussion topics or on any subject. When he has finished with the books he sends them back to the commission, the only cost to him being the postage. This service, which most States give, is a great help, but using it is not so convenient as having books near at hand, where a reader can look them over and select the ones that just fit the need.

Rural discussion groups in Hunterdon County, N. J., use a book van which brings books right to the farmer's door or to nearby cross-roads stations. The Hunterdon County Library is a rural-service library, with headquarters in the county courthouse but with books actually out among the people. The "bookmobile," as the book automobile has come to be called, travels the country roads 5 days a week, stopping at grange halls, grocery stores, schools, farmhouses, and in some districts lending books to the people along the roadside.

In this county the grange has formed its own discussion groups. One launched its program by discussing the book *It Can't Happen Here*, by Sinclair Lewis, and went on to the study of dictator forms of government. They read *New Governments of Europe*, by Raymond Leslie Buell and *Four Patterns of Revolution* by Ethan T. Colton, and finally decided they preferred education for planning to regimentation. The county library supplied the books.



FIGURE 1.—A rural discussion group opening up several questions of social and economic change. This discussion will be followed by reading and study.

PARENT EDUCATION

Farm women are seeking library books for their own particular problems. Many want help in bringing up their children. They study books on child development, care, training, and on child psychology and family relations.

Great strides have been made in Illinois, for instance, where rural folks are organized in groups for studying family living and the training of children. In 1 year these people borrowed at least 1,300 books on these subjects from the Illinois Library Extension Division.

In a rural community in La Ballona, Calif., a parent-education class is held in a branch of the Los Angeles County Library. The librarian of this branch says: "All of our books about the psychology of the child and the adolescent, and other similar books, are in use all the time."

STATE-WIDE READING PROJECTS

Many people welcome suggestions on what to read. They are interested in a certain subject but do not know what books are best. Those who have library service near at hand can look over the books on, say, radio repair, dress designing, birds, Mexico, or Fascism. They can talk over different books with the librarian who works constantly with them. But many rural people do not yet have this service or are not yet accustomed to using it when it is available, so State-wide reading projects have been organized in a number of States by the State home demonstration leaders and the State library agencies. Book lists are prepared by the library agencies on various subjects—travel, biography, home improvement, etc.—and are made available through home demonstration clubs.

"Read for fact and fun," is the slogan adopted in Nebraska for this kind of reading guided by lists. The leader of the home demonstration club chooses a list, and the members of her group then read the books they prefer. The books are borrowed from local libraries if they are available or from the Nebraska Library Commission (fig. 2). The same kind of reading guidance and stimulus is organized in the Dakotas, Kentucky, New Hampshire, and some other States.

RURAL ORGANIZATION ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM

Rural organizations, like the Farm Bureau, the Farmers' Union, and the National Grange, want books, magazines, plays, and sometimes pictures and phonograph records for use in planning and putting on their programs. Such materials, together with help in program planning, are available in the areas that are served by good rural libraries. Frequently the officers of rural organizations and agencies are used as lending centers for the library.

BROADENING THE PROGRAM OF RURAL SCHOOLS

Rural children and their teachers use books eagerly where they are available. But library shelves in many rural schools today are just about as bare as Mother Hubbard's cupboard. Library books apparently were not so necessary when the three R's were likely to be the sum total of the teaching. But with progressive methods of



FIGURE 2.—Here comes that package of books from the central collection. The rural free delivery has brought it to an eager borrower.



FIGURE 3.—For progressive methods of teaching in rural schools, books and materials of many kinds are used.

teaching, youngsters need not just one geography textbook, but five or six related books. They need half a dozen histories and dozens of supplementary books for other subjects—not to own themselves, of course, but to borrow from the library.

The lesson in the up-to-date rural school is quite different from the lesson of some years ago. The teacher does not say, "the lesson for tomorrow will be pages 27 to 35." Instead she tells the pupils to scurry around among library books and read all they can find about, say, the Cherokee Indians, or the Rocky Mountains, or the Mayflower. Lessons like these make youngsters more independent in their thinking and more self-reliant in their ability to find information for themselves in later years. When they are fortunate enough to be taught



FIGURE 4.—Youngsters make full use of book collections once their interest is aroused, especially if there is a librarian on hand to help them. They step right into the bookmobile and feel as though they were in a little library of their own.

by progressive teachers using these new methods, they are glad when the bell rings in the morning and sorry when the time comes to leave in the afternoon.

When young people really get interested in a subject, there is no end to the time and effort they will spend in reading and gathering information (fig. 4). Here is an average boy who did not care whether he studied his geography lesson or not. Then one day he happened on a book about stamps of all nations, in the school library. He found it so interesting that he began to collect stamps. In a few months he was led to an intense interest in geography by the round-about route of stamp collecting. When teachers and librarians are skillful enough to put the right book into the hands of the right child at the right time, wonders can be accomplished.

These newer methods of teaching through using many books have greatly broadened the child's mental horizon, made him more independent in the use of books, and increased his ability to read fast. The child who has learned to be familiar with many books and to glean information quickly from the printed page is usually far ahead of any fellow pupils who are not accustomed to such reading habits.

Of course, before this kind of teaching can be done, the library books must be available. City boys and girls usually find a well-equipped branch of the city library within a few blocks of their homes or a good school library in their school. Many rural children do not yet have this advantage.

In several hundred rural areas in the United States, however, regional or county library service has been set up. The rural school



FIGURE 5.—Children ready to enter a W. P. A. bookmobile, at a one-room school in Athens County, Ohio.

has its own branch library, or the bookmobile travels around the country leaving new books for the boys and girls and taking back those already read. Well-equipped libraries of this kind can also lend pictures, phonograph records, pamphlets, magazines, and maps. In this kind of library service the cost is divided and the benefits multiplied by the number of schools included in the service.

In one California county, where books are circulated among the rural schools in this way, the pupils have become great home readers. In a 1-teacher school with 23 pupils in 8 grades a record was kept of the children's reading. These boys and girls had read all the way from 11 books to 42 each, in 1 year. It has been proved that children who get the reading habit progress faster in their studies than others who do not.

A visit of a bookmobile to a rural school is a stimulating sight. The pupils troop out of the building with books piled high on their

arms, looking eagerly for the new books filling the shelves of the "library on wheels." They look over the inviting volumes. There are Aztec Hunters, Snake Gold, The Story of Mexico, The Boy's King Arthur, Ferdinand, Hans Brinker or the Silver Skates, and Little Women. There are hero stories, stories of adventure, history, poetry, travel.

To the rural school teacher this visit of the bookmobile from the county or regional library is a first aid and a great stimulant. With all of these new books supplementing the school texts, the classes are enlivened, and the whole educational process is made more effective.

A Vermont teacher in a rural school tells of her experience when the school was given regional library service.

The books that I found in the school equipment were old and few. There was no material whatsoever with which to teach social studies. I decided to try the project method and asked the regional librarian for help in selecting library material. My first project on the Scandinavian countries was a grand success. The librarian sent me everything imaginable—a project manual, folk-dance books, copies of the National Geographic Magazine, fascinating books on Norse folklore from the illustrations of which we got suggestions for making posters and notebook covers. The project which was to have covered a month lasted almost two, our material being so extensive as to enable my class to develop more phases of the problem than had originally been planned. We are soon to begin another such project. I am sure it will be equally successful and enjoyable, as I have great confidence in our regional librarian.

The book truck from Logansport, Ind., on just one of its trips to the Jefferson Township Schools, a consolidated school in Cass County, with about 200 children in the first 8 grades, lent 213 books.

But how can rural schools afford to pay for this influx of books to aid the modern methods of teaching? For each school to buy all of the books would be expensive, but where county or regional library service is begun the books are shared by many schools, and the cost is spread over the whole area.

SELF-EDUCATION

To satisfy the great urge to continue one's education when school days are over and to accomplish what is sometimes called self-education, is hardly possible today without books. The man or woman who has been keeping up with the swiftly changing times through his reading of books, magazines, and bulletins, may be actually ahead of the one who, though he may have had a better formal education, has dropped his reading habits and has become rusty.

Many whose education was interrupted by circumstances in their homes—people who were not able to go as far up the educational ladder as they wished—are now recognizing that it is never too late to learn. Some of these "late-learners" are accomplishing wonders with the help of library guidance (fig 6.)

Some libraries have outlined special courses to fit the needs of just such individuals. A librarian makes a list of reliable and readable books and magazine articles on the particular subject in which they are interested, whether it be raising squabs, handicrafts, parliamentary law, American history, civil service, or world peace. Some may want added information on hobbies like Indian relics, patchwork quilts, or ship models.

This book list is like a reading prescription, starting the individual where he is and leading him on to a broader knowledge of the subject. Where there is no regional library the guidance is sometimes available from the State library agency. Courses on topics ranging from boiler making to block printing, from the manufacture of ice cream to music appreciation, and from tapestry to taxidermy have been prepared by the Oregon State Library. This service was begun during the depression to help young people to continue their education when they were forced to leave school. It grew, and the scope was broadened to include anyone interested in self-education.

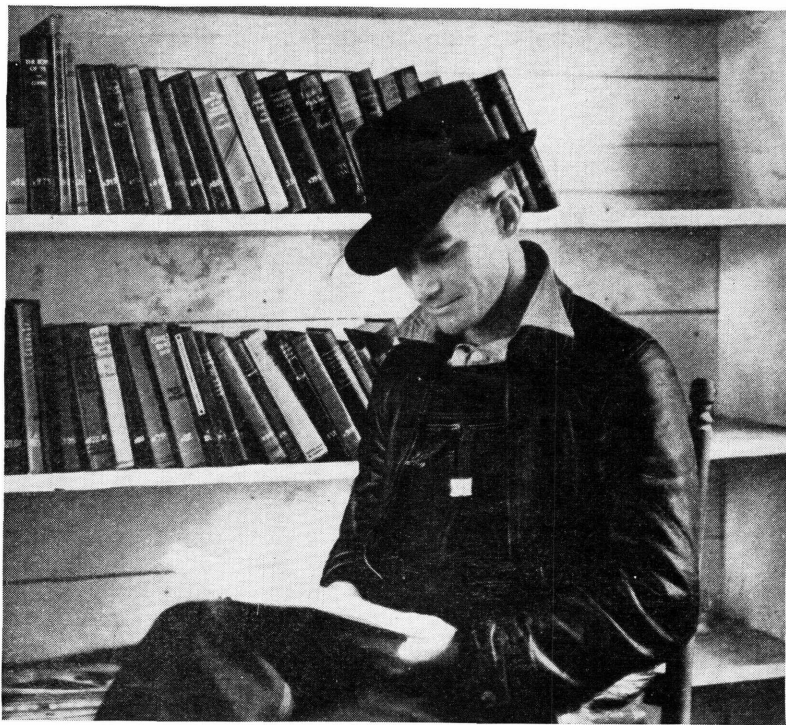


FIGURE 6.—A "late-learner" making a careful choice at a library station of the Tri-Parish Library.

Here is a sample of one of the requests that came in from a rural correspondent of a newspaper, who wanted to improve his way of writing:

Will you please outline a simple course in journalism for me? I am also interested in magazine articles and feature writing. I would particularly like a book which would give me some idea as to what one needs to improve one's writing ability. The rest I leave with you. I believe this is the fourth reading course I am taking from the State library. I have had a lot of enjoyment as well as profit from the courses.

Sometimes a book starts a hobby that winds up in being a profitable side line. During lean years more than a few farmers have gotten ideas from books which have started them in such work. In a Southern State a few years ago a man on a 3-acre farm began to raise

frogs as a hobby. He wrote in for books and became so successful that he is now raising frogs for sale.

A man interested in furniture began to renovate old chairs, from directions in books, in his spare time, but the hobby became so profitable that he is starting a repair shop at home. First he asked for books on repairing chairs, then on upholstering, and on finishing woods. He finally rounded out his information by getting books on painting and the use of spray guns.

Another farmer killed a calf and found the hide so beautiful that he wanted to preserve it. He asked for books on tanning. Now he tans hides to make all the leather needed to mend his harness. He even found an opening in an adjoining State for supplying hides for making book covers. He estimates that the books lent him by the Louisiana Library Commission, including the expensive technical ones, saved or earned for him about \$200 a year.

Reading courses have been prepared by the Oregon State Library during the last few years for literally thousands of students who are eager to continue along a special line. Some of the books went to young men in C. C. C. camps, some to unemployed young people, others to the farmers and their wives living in isolated places. Many requests came for reading prescriptions on technical subjects, such as Diesel engines and radio.

READING GUIDANCE NEAR AT HAND

More personal and informal guidance is given by the county or regional librarian who visits branch libraries and stations or travels with the bookmobile. Just glimpse for a minute a stop made by a bookmobile in the territory of the Tri-Parish Library of northern Louisiana on a warm spring day.

A farm woman stood shading her eyes as she watched the bookmobile coming out of a whirl of dust down the road. When it swung into her farmyard she hurried up to the open shelves at the side of the library on wheels and looked over the titles: *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *David Copperfield*, *Texas*, the *Lone Star State*, books on orcharding and tomato growing, fiction, biographies. Finally, with sparkling eyes she reached for a thin volume and turned to the librarian.

"I'd like this one on gardening," she said, "I'm going to put in my seed next week, and this may give me some ideas."

"Of course," answered the librarian who always goes with the bookmobile driver on these trips through the cut-over pine country back in the red-clay hills where farmers live far apart. "How did you like the book on furniture repairing you checked out 2 weeks ago?"

"Oh, it was just the thing. I got some good hints on fixing the chair backs and repairing the couch, too."

This woman never misses the visit of the bookmobile (fig. 7). She has talked over with the librarian her chicken raising, bringing up her children, her flower gardening, and other questions. There was always a book for each problem. This personal contact with the librarians who can give enough time and thought to a particular question is worth more than the book itself, some of the rural folks claim.

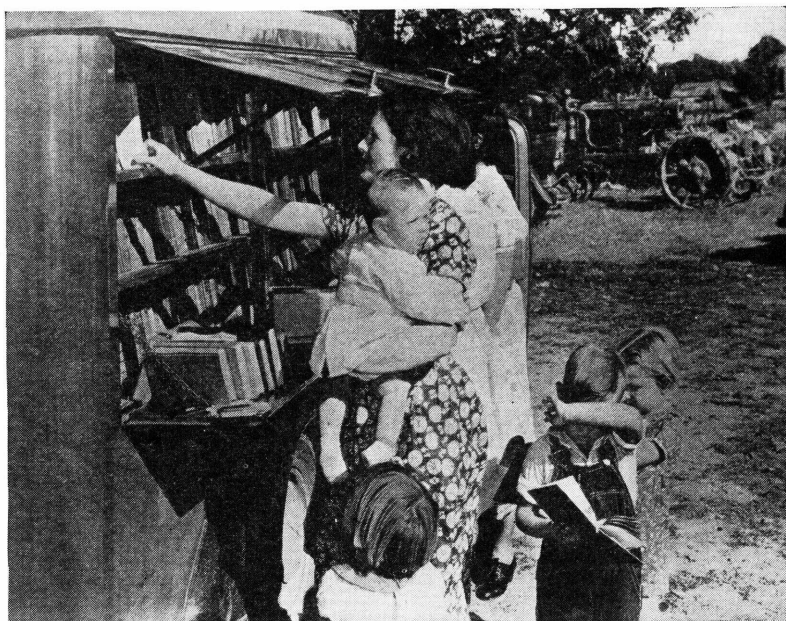


FIGURE 7.—This woman, formerly a sharecropper, never misses the visit of the bookmobile to the Case rural rehabilitation settlement, Pulaski County, Ark.



FIGURE 8.—Snow does not deter the bookmobile, the library driver, nor the borrowers.

If bookmobiles, their librarian-drivers, and the readers ignore heat and sun, so do they ignore ice and snow. In Vermont the bookmobile gets through if any vehicle can, and the borrowers come out to meet it (fig. 8).

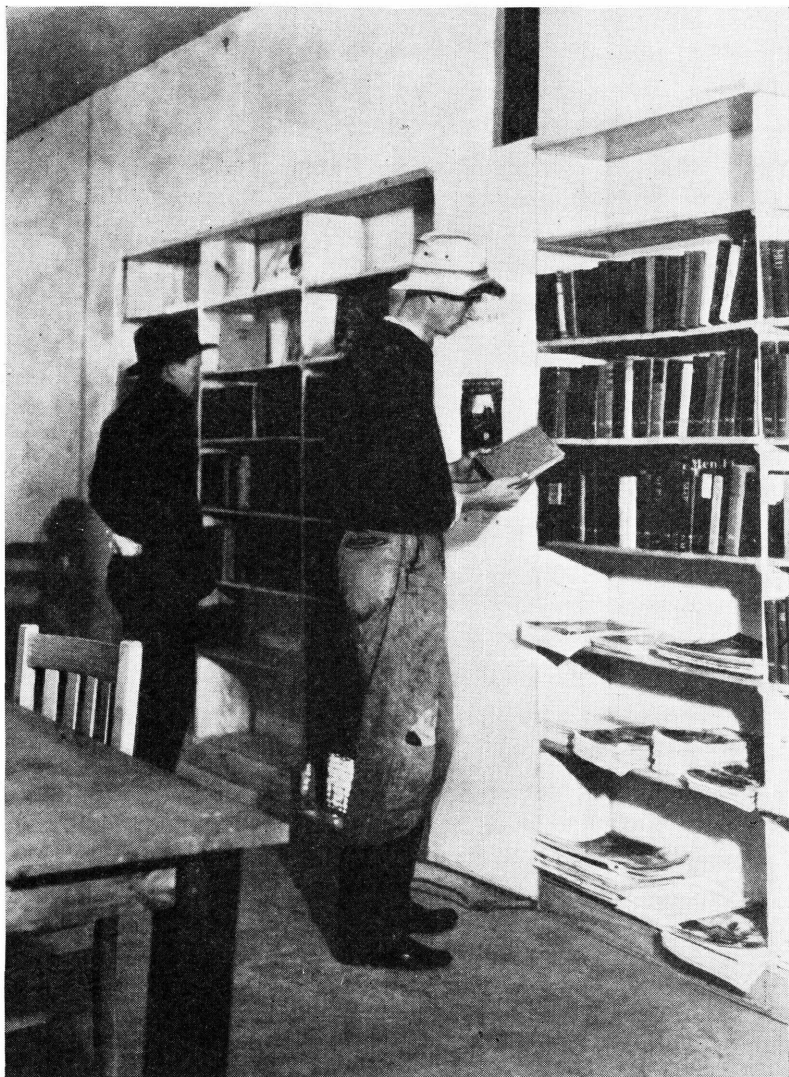


FIGURE 9.—These young men can choose the books they want from a local collection that is changed from time to time as it is a part of the Tri-Parish Library in Louisiana.

In the United States there are today approximately 400 counties out of some 3,000 where library service has become an actuality for rural people. In these counties rural folks have books, magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, and other reading material in the same

abundance that city folks have. They have good books of fiction for evenings. They have books on the agricultural questions that are puzzling the farmers. They have books on hobbies, vocations, health, history, politics, and biography (fig. 9). They have books for their children at school. They have books on family life to help solve the difficulties that arise. They have access to books on every possible subject from painting the barn to the advantages of a democratic form of government and the value of the Bill of Rights.

Farmers in these favored areas are finding out that books and library service not only help them to improve agricultural methods but also to keep abreast of current and changing economic, social, and political problems, so that they can take their share in the wise shaping of present and future policies

LIBRARY SERVICE OVER WIDE AREAS

Rural people who are getting the best in library service today are those who live in areas that are served by county or regional libraries. A region, in the library sense, may be one large county, or several adjacent counties, or even a geographic or trade area. But whatever the type of area, the service is practically the same.

WHAT REGIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE IS

In a county or regional library system, books are taken to the remotest parts of the region from a headquarters library, which serves as a main reservoir. Books are distributed through branch libraries in community centers; through service stations at convenient points like crossroads stores, schools, and homes (fig. 10); and often by a book automobile or library on wheels. The smaller lending collections in farm areas are frequently exchanged—the books that have been read in one station go on to another. Whatever the methods used, the object is to put books and other reading materials within easy reach of every citizen.

Branch libraries in towns and villages have their own reading rooms and reference collections like a separate town library, but unlike the separate town library, they can draw on the resources of the large regional book collection and on the advice and help of the experienced and especially trained regional librarian. The existing town libraries in a section where county or regional service is established, find that they do well to affiliate with it, to get access to its larger resources and specialized services.

The good county or regional library can afford to have a trained and experienced librarian to organize and administer the service. In the many communities throughout the section where there are book-lending stations, however, local workers serve as custodians, and in this way a close touch with the interests and needs of the local borrowers is possible. The regional librarian makes frequent visits to branches and stations and travels with the book automobile if one is used. He or she gives the local workers any help they need and talks directly with rural readers, fitting the reading materials into the programs and projects of rural organizations.

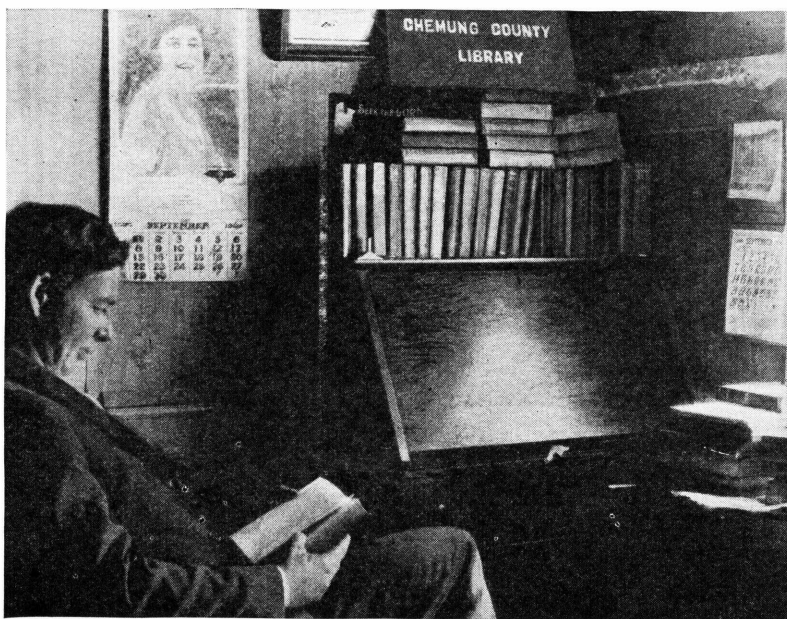


FIGURE 10.—A small lending library of books kept by a farm family for the use of their neighbors. The books are changed frequently by drawing on a central collection at Elmira, N. Y.



FIGURE 11.—Substantial and well-read borrowers from the Rochester Town Library in Vermont extend their reading by using the regional library service of the State.

OPEN CHANNEL TO SPECIALIZED SERVICES

The separate village or town library, or even the very small county library, usually has such limited funds that its book collection quickly becomes stale (fig. 11). But its readers may want books on any one of a hundred subjects—books that a large library easily supplies at no extra cost to the taxpayer. Not only can the community book collections that are part of a regional system be kept fresh by frequent exchanges, but any book in the system can be made available. A postal or telephone request to the headquarters library may bring the material by return mail. The services of an able librarian, and often of specialists in various fields such as children's work, are shared. Even a very small community thus has an open channel to specialized services as a result of this pooling of resources.



FIGURE 12.—Readers of all ages find the books they want at this little library because it is a branch of the county library of Greenville County, S. C. Greenville County contracts with the Greenville Public Library for its service.

REGIONAL SERVICE WORKS WELL

Cooperative library service over wide areas is not a new idea. County libraries were established as early as 1900, and about 400 counties are now served by county or regional library systems. They are scattered over 39 States, covering all parts of the country from California to New Jersey and from Minnesota to Louisiana (fig. 12).

NEARLY 39,000,000 RURAL AMERICANS UNSERVED

Yet in spite of this good start there are still nearly 39,000,000 rural people in the United States who do not have easy access to permanent

public-library service. Some of these people use neighboring city or town libraries, usually on the payment of an annual fee, since they do not help provide the public funds that support the service. Some borrow books by mail from their State library agencies, paying the postage one or both ways. But it is one thing to drive to town for books or to sit down and write a letter to your State library agency and quite another to choose your books when you are doing an errand at your crossroads store or from a bookmobile that stops near your home. Our democratic ideal of equal educational opportunity for all cannot be fully realized until this easy access to reading materials and reading guidance is available to all citizens—rural as well as urban.

HOW MODERN RURAL LIBRARIES ARE STARTED

The next question is, How can farm families get these services? Fortunately the regional library-service plan is flexible and can be adapted to meet local conditions. The selection of a satisfactory region will depend on circumstances. Where the population is large enough and the resources are adequate, the county has proved to be a satisfactory unit for library service, but where counties are small in population and wealth, several may need to join together in order to make available a high type of service. This combination of adjacent counties is now possible under the laws of most States. Some experiments in service to geographic and trade areas are now under way.

THE STATE APPROACH

Planning for the State as a whole is important. This may mean dividing the State into library regions suitable for library service. This newer method assures complete coverage and a careful mapping of the region. Establishment by local initiative alone may be haphazard—the territory that has adequate means and plenty of leadership establishes a library, whereas neighboring counties that need the service fully as much go without. The administration of the service can be controlled locally in either case.

Another type of State approach is for the State library agency to set up regional branches with State funds, supplemented from local sources. In small or sparsely populated States this seems a logical method. In Vermont, for instance, the State library agency is coordinating the services of the many existing small libraries through four regional centers. Each regional librarian, with her bookmobile, travels over regular routes and makes stops at stated times. The local librarians draw on this service to fill the widely varied needs of their borrowers. When a patron asks for a book that is not in the local collection, the librarian writes or telephones to the regional center and has it brought out on the next bookmobile trip.

In Louisiana the State library has organized several regional libraries, with State funds and local cooperation. These regional libraries are stimulating a desire for similar service throughout the State.

COOPERATION WITH ANOTHER AGENCY

Regional libraries may be established through cooperation with another agency that is interested in rural betterment. The libraries, being developed in several parts of the area served by the Tennessee Valley Authority through contracts between established libraries or counties and the T. V. A., are a case in point (fig. 13). One of these regions covers three counties in northeastern Alabama; another is developing from one county in southwestern North Carolina but may reach into Tennessee and Georgia; a third will cover four, or possibly five, counties in Kentucky. What is being done through the T. V. A. might be emulated by other Federal or non-Federal agencies that are working to equalize educational facilities.



FIGURE 13.—A corner of the community library at Pickwick Dam, Tenn., which is a part of the T. V. A. library service.

LOCAL ACTION

The county can decide for itself whether it wishes to have county-wide library service, or several adjacent counties can unite in setting up a regional library, according to the provisions of library laws in most States (fig. 14). These laws differ in detail, the county board taking the action in some States, while a popular vote is needed in others. The county authorities usually appoint a library board composed of citizens who serve without pay and are responsible for the expenditure of the library funds and for employing a librarian to organize and administer the service. Instead, the county may enter into a contract with a good library in the area for county-wide service, or with an adjacent county library, as was done by two California counties—Mariposa, which receives service from Merced County Library, and Sierra, which has contracted with the Plumas County Library.

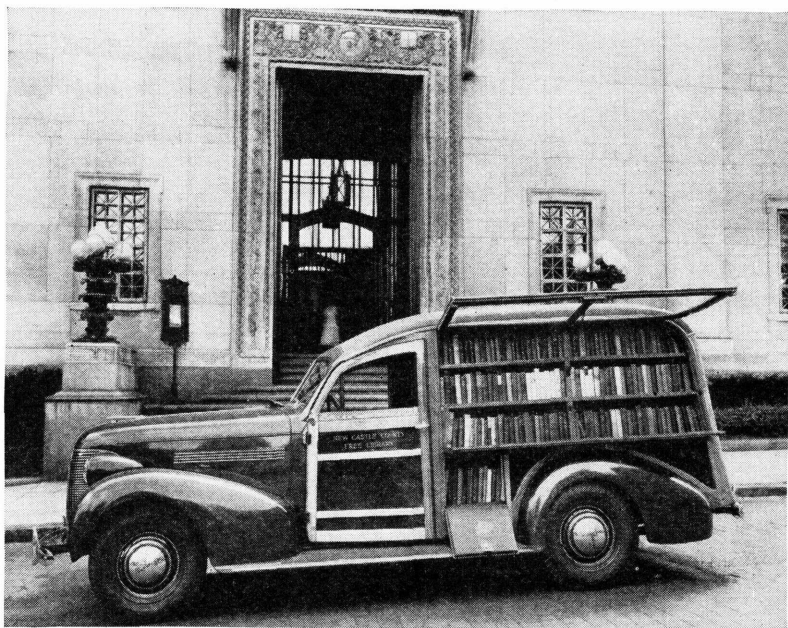


FIGURE 14.—This library building and bookmobile are at the service of the rural people of New Castle County, Del., because the county contracts with the Wilmington Institute Free Library for its service.

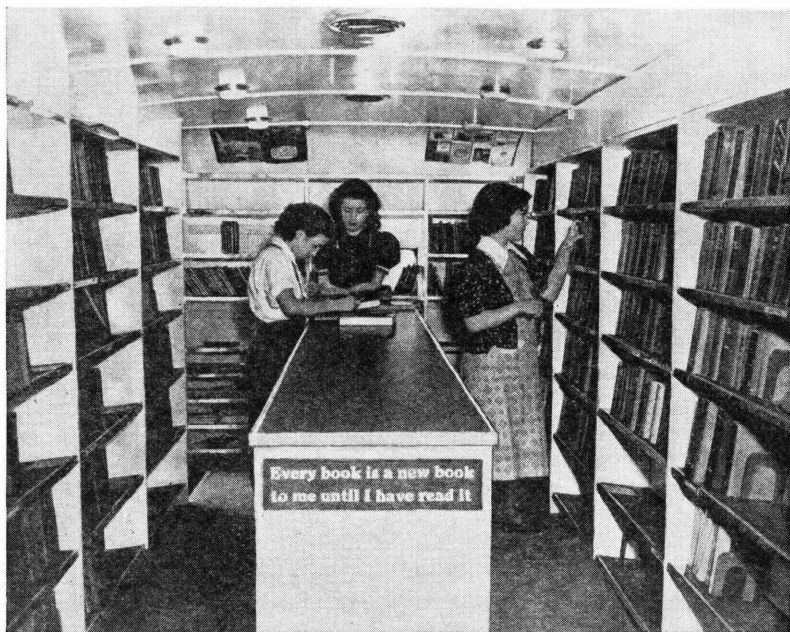


FIGURE 15.—Inside a bookmobile, bought with county funds in Clark County, Ohio. This county gives informal library service to rural people. A W. P. A. assistant to the librarian is helping two girls to select their books.

WORK-RELIEF PROJECTS

Informal library service to rural areas has been provided in many States with Work Projects Administration or National Youth Administration workers, paid from Federal funds (fig.15). Many of these projects are serving as successful demonstrations and leading to the establishment of permanent service where they have been planned and supervised by experienced librarians or by well-advised leaders. Some of the best are those sponsored on a State basis for they have the guidance of State library authorities who make them part of the plan for developing State-wide library service. Book collections of State library agencies are being used generously in these demonstrations. The State projects make possible trained State and district supervisors, while the separate county projects are less likely to have such guidance.

Another important factor is active citizen interest. In South Carolina, for example, where a State-wide library project brought the first local book service many counties had ever had, citizen groups in each county acted as cooperating sponsors. The time and energy spent by these organizations in arousing public interest and in securing funds for books, has had much to do with the establishment in a number of the counties of permanent county library service—the goal of these demonstrations. From the beginning, county authorities may be asked to contribute toward the purchase of books and equipment, paving the way for permanent support. Action to establish the service on a legal basis may be taken early, as was done in several counties in Michigan.

FINANCING RURAL LIBRARY SERVICE

When rural people establish library service, they want it to be a service of good quality. This implies public support for libraries just as public support is provided for schools. An annual income of \$1 per person for libraries serving a population of 25,000 or more is recommended in the Standards for Public Libraries adopted by the American Library Association. Counties having a smaller population will usually find it better to combine with others to make a region large enough for effective service. Money may actually be wasted by setting up service for too small a number of people, for poor service is not worth the expenditure of public funds. If a small beginning is made, plans can be worked out to obtain more adequate funds as soon as the service has proved its value. The county authorities will determine the appropriation each year (according to detailed provisions of the State law) and will be responsive to public opinion.

STATE AID

Many areas that want county or regional libraries are not able to bear the whole cost of the service. The State, however, has access to new sources of revenue and has a responsibility for libraries as it has for schools and agricultural extension services, which it now aids.

There is a growing movement, therefore, in many parts of the country toward generous State grants for the development of county and regional library service. The way in which this legislation is drawn, appropriations are made, and service is developed varies in different States, but the resulting increase in rural library development is the same.

Michigan, in 1937, passed legislation providing for continuing annual appropriations of \$500,000 for new service and for existing libraries. The first money became available in the fall of 1938, and several counties immediately appropriated the local money necessary to secure State grants. This State action was repealed in June 1939



FIGURE 16.—Fourteen readers at one rural stop are getting books from this bookmobile of the Tri-State Parish Library in Louisiana.

in an effort to balance the budget. In several other States appropriations have been made for a biennium and have then come up for renewal in the next legislative session. In Arkansas, 10 new county libraries were established as a result of the first biennial State-aid appropriation. In Ohio, biennial State appropriations for library aid over a period of several years have been important factors in the rapid development of county library service. The establishment of four regional centers in Vermont, as a result of State aid, and regional libraries in Louisiana (fig. 16) are financed largely by State funds. New Jersey, which has had State aid for county libraries for many years, has service in more than half of its counties. Many States have adopted State aid as a definite part of their library planning and are working to obtain it.

FEDERAL AID

Federal aid for libraries is believed by the American Library Association to be necessary in addition to State aid, if inequalities between the States in ability to support adequate library service are to be overcome.

President Roosevelt's Advisory Committee on Education recommended grants to the States specifically for the development of rural public-library service. These recommendations have been embodied in legislation introduced in the United States Congress. If this or similar legislation passes, a rapid development of library service in rural areas will result.

Only by the united efforts of local, State, and Federal governments can the ideal of a nationally adequate program of library service be approached. The final result should be a cooperative partnership in library development in which the Federal Government shares responsibility with the States and local units.

Such was the conclusion of a study of library service by Carleton B. Joeckel for the Advisory Committee on Education.

LEADERSHIP IN LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

Intelligent direction is essential to the development of adequate library facilities. Leadership on the State level is particularly important since legal provisions are made by the State, and economic and social conditions within a State influence all social and educational progress.

THE STATE LIBRARY EXTENSION AGENCY

The State library extension agency takes the lead in library development within the State. Whatever its particular form, it is an official, State-supported agency, charged with the responsibility for developing adequate local public-library service for every citizen. It may be a State library, library department, library commission, or a library division of the State department of education. But whatever it is called, it is the first place to turn to for help in library establishment or in improving existing facilities. A list of the State agencies will be found on page 26. The State library agency plans and works for good library legislation as a basis for library establishment; it administers State-aid funds where available and directs campaigns to obtain such aid in States where it is needed. The State library associations are working for the development and improvement of library service throughout their States. Most of them have State planning committees which have worked out practical plans for good State-wide library service. In the few States without such agencies, the State library associations are usually working to establish them, and in the meantime these associations serve as sources of information.

The State library agency bridges the gap until good local library service is available, by lending collections of books to communities and schools or a few books at a time by mail directly to individuals. As fast as regional libraries are established, the State agency devotes itself to supplying unusual books which, because the demand is only occasional, the county or regional library does not feel justified in

buying. In some States material for study, debate, and club use is also available from the extension division of the State university.

NATIONAL LIBRARY AGENCIES

States that do not have State library agencies will be particularly interested in help available from national agencies. A Library Service Division in the United States Office of Education, Washington, D. C., which began operation in 1938, will be an increasingly important factor as its service develops. The recognition of the importance of libraries in the educational program of our country, which the estab-

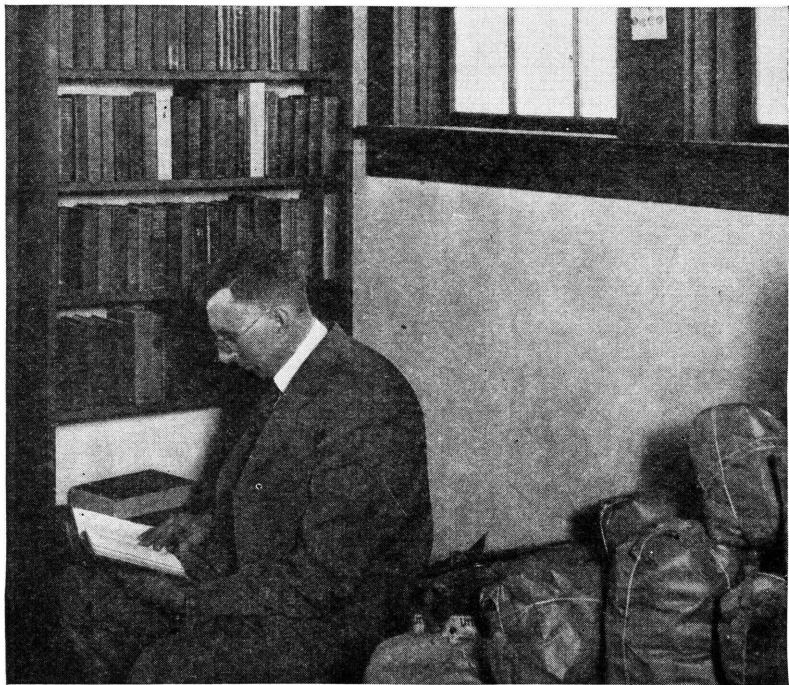


FIGURE 17.—A county-library deposit that takes up little space and is easy to manage.

lishment of this agency proves, is in itself a stimulant to every program of library development.

The American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill., which has provided national leadership in library extension since 1876, gives general advice and information on library establishment, desirable types of rural library service, and State aid. It works with the State library agencies, but in States without them it gives more specific advice.

CITIZEN GROUPS

Citizen interest and action in extending and improving library service are of primary importance since library service belongs to the

citizens and is set up to serve them (fig. 17). Such rural organizations as the National Grange and the Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation have long since endorsed county libraries, and vigorous support to county and regional library development has been given by their State and local groups in many States. Some States have found it advisable to set up State-wide citizens' library committees that bring together representatives of many organizations with a single purpose.

The increasing interest of the agricultural extension service in cultural development in rural localities is evident. These agencies have started State-wide reading projects, and have cooperated with library extension programs. Radio book clubs have been a feature of at least one State college of agriculture. The State and county extension workers are an excellent group with which to work on rural-library development.

Help is also available from organizations other than those concerned entirely with rural matters. For example the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the American Home Economics Association, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the National Federation of Business and Professional Women, encourage library-extension activities. Men's service clubs are increasingly active in the extension of library service to rural areas.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTION

FOR A COUNTY OR REGIONAL LIBRARY

A county or regional library movement may spring from one person's or organization's interest in having a library. From this beginning must come concerted action by all kinds of people in all parts of the county or region, and by many organizations. To start such a movement the following steps are suggested:

(1) Get information and advice from the State library agency at the State capital on such points as the State law under which county and regional service can be established; what facilities the area itself may include; State grants that may be available; help that may be obtained from State-library work-relief projects.

(2) Ask the organization to which you belong to appoint a committee to study the material, consider the desirability of county or regional service, and recommend action.

(3) Invite the State library worker to come (at State expense) to a regular meeting to discuss library needs and to answer questions, or invite this worker to a special meeting with representatives of other groups and leaders such as the county agricultural and home extension agents and the county superintendent of schools.

(4) Call on your State library association for help (if your State is one of the few without a well-established State library agency). Ask the librarian of the nearest library to tell you who is president this year.

(5) Organize a committee representing many groups, to conduct a campaign of information throughout the county or region.

(6) Obtain formal action by the county authorities or take whatever legal steps are necessary in your State.

(7) See that the county authorities appoint men and women of high caliber to the county library board.

(8) Back them up in meeting whatever conditions are necessary to obtain State aid if it is available.

FOR IMMEDIATE BOOK NEEDS

While a county or regional library is developing you may want to—

- (1) Write to your State library agency for individual books by mail.
- (2) Ask your local organization to get a collection of books (travelling library) from the State agency and help find a good place for it and a good person to check out the books to the readers.
- (3) Start a book club.
- (4) Enroll in a State reading project.

FOR THE STATE AS A WHOLE

A State organization may help its smaller units get the library service they need by action for the State as a whole. The State leader or group may—

- (1) Obtain information (by writing to or visiting the State library extension agency) on the State plan for developing local library service; the State law permitting the establishment of county or regional libraries, State aid available, or campaigns for securing State aid; State-sponsored library work-relief projects which may be used to demonstrate the value of rural public-library service.
- (2) Report on book needs and interest in library service to the State library agency.
- (3) Distribute State-agency leaflets on library needs and establishment.
- (4) In a State that has no State library agency, work with other State groups to establish one.
- (5) Endorse measures and support campaigns for State and Federal aid and other legislative action for the development of library service for all the people.

SOME TYPES OF RURAL LIBRARIES

To show how the principles for establishing rural service, which have been discussed, can be adapted to meet different situations, specific information about libraries of several types is given. The three county libraries described have been firmly established over a period of years. The newer regional services are still too young for comparable statistics to be available.

A LARGE CALIFORNIA COUNTY LIBRARY

Kern County Library, Calif.

Headquarters, courthouse, Bakersfield.

Organized, 1910.

Area of county, 8,003 square miles.

Population of county (1930 census), 82,570 (including the county seat, Bakersfield, with 26,000).

Number of books in collection, 274,447.

Number of books borrowed for home use, 811,709 (almost 10 books per person).

Material other than books available for lending—pamphlets, maps, pictures, slides, films, sheet music, music records, stereographs, stereoscopes, charts, globes.

Income (the librarian's salary is not included as that is paid from the county salary fund).

From county funds-----	\$111, 217
From school districts that have turned over library funds to pay for school service-----	13, 999
From county teachers' fund-----	1, 500
From other sources (includes a good balance from the previous year)-----	10, 430
Total-----	137, 146

Income per person—\$1.66 (this high income makes possible a high type of service with many special features).

Library staff:

In central library	number	29
In branches and stations (many of them local people acting as custodians)	number	82

Total 111

Fifteen members of the staff have full library training and 11 have partial training.

Branches and stations:

Community branches—with reading rooms	26
Community stations (lending centers)	45
School branches and deposits	105

Total 176

NOTE.—Library statistics are for the fiscal year 1937–38.

A NEW JERSEY COUNTY LIBRARY

Hunterdon County Library, N. J.

Headquarters, courthouse, Flemington.

Established, 1928.

Area of county, 437 square miles.

Population of county (1930 census), 34,728. Population served 27,481. (Two towns, Lambertville, population 4,518 and Flemington, population 2,729, are not served by the county library since, under New Jersey law, they are paying over one-third of a mill for the support of their own town libraries and are therefore automatically exempt from county library tax and service.)

Number of books in county library collection, 25,217.

Number of books loaned to centers for relending 38,794. It is estimated that not less than 193,970 county library books were read in the county during the past year.

Income: The figures given below represent only part of the funds used for the county service. Local communities which have branches or centers supply the custodian quarters, furniture, and equipment. The county supplies the advisory services of a trained librarian, a mobile book collection, special books on request, book talks, and exhibits; and it organizes discussion groups. The New Jersey county library standards recommend that an amount of 35 cents per person per year be spent from county funds and 65 cents per person from local funds.

From county funds	\$5,756.22
From State grants	760.00
Other	102.49

Total 6,618.71

Income per person per year—24 cents (from county funds).

Library staff: There are two full-time library-school-trained persons and three W. P. A. clerical workers at headquarters.

Branches and centers:

Community branches	4
Community lending centers	83
School branches and deposits	76

Total 163

A book automobile makes daily trips through the area on a regular schedule, stopping at schools and community centers at intervals of 6 weeks.

NOTE.—Library statistics are for the year 1938.

COUNTY SERVICE BY CONTRACT WITH A CITY LIBRARY

Knox County, Tenn.

Service by contract with the Lawson McGhee Library, Knoxville.

Knoxville Library established in 1888.

County service established in 1928.

Area of Knox County, 504 square miles.

Population (1930 census), county outside Knoxville, 50,100; Knoxville, 105,802.

Number of books in entire book collection (city and county), 102,714. Between 15,000 and 20,000 are in a special county collection. The city collection is drawn upon for county use as needed.

Number of books borrowed for home use (city and county), 652,017; county circulation 1938, 269,702.

Income: County appropriation, \$15,458; city appropriation, \$49,400; total, \$64,858.

The county service, with a modest income of about 30 cents per capita for those outside of Knoxville, gains strength from its connection with the firmly established Knoxville library, with its carefully selected book collection and strong staff.

Library staff:	Number
In central library.....	21
In city branches and stations.....	4
In county branches and stations.....	6
Total.....	31

Professional training:

In the city service 11 have full library training and 5 have partial training.

In the county service 1 has had full library training and 1 partial training.

Branches and stations:

The city service has 4 white community branches and 1 Negro branch.

The county service has 4 community branches and 10 school deposits.

A bookmobile travels daily through the county on a regular schedule visiting schools and communities at 2-week intervals.

Service is given to Negroes from a city branch library, with a reading room, and to all 10 of the Negro elementary schools in the county through collections of books exchanged from time to time.

Knoxville as a regional library center. A study of the Knoxville area shows that Knoxville might well be a center for library service to 10 counties in a radius of 40 miles. Service has begun in Rhea, Meigs, Roane, and Loudon Counties.

NOTE.—Library statistics are for the year 1938.

DIRECTORY OF STATE LIBRARY EXTENSION AGENCIES

Alabama Public Library Service Division, Department of Archives and History, Montgomery.

Arkansas Library Commission, War Memorial Building, Little Rock.

California State Library, Sacramento.

Colorado State Library, Denver.

Connecticut Public Library Committee, State Board of Education, State Office Building, Hartford.

Delaware State Library Commission, Dover.

Florida State Library, Tallahassee.

Georgia Library Commission, Atlanta.

Idaho Free Traveling Library Commission, Boise.

Illinois State Library, Centennial Memorial Building, Springfield.

Indiana State Library and Historical Department, Indianapolis.

Iowa State Traveling Library, Historical Building, Des Moines.

Kansas State Library and Traveling Libraries Commission, Topeka.

Kentucky Department of Library and Archives, Frankfort.

Louisiana Library Commission, Baton Rouge.

Maine State Library, Augusta.

Maryland Public Library Advisory Commission, 400 Cathedral Street, Baltimore.

Massachusetts Division of Public Libraries, Department of Education, Room 212-B, State House, Boston.

Michigan State Library, State Office Building, Lansing.

Minnesota Library Division, Department of Education, State Office Building, St. Paul.

Mississippi Library Commission, New Capitol, Jackson.

Missouri Library Commission, Jefferson City.

Montana State Library Extension Commission, Care of University of Montana Library, Missoula.
Nebraska Public Library Commission, Lincoln.
Nevada State Library, Carson City.
New Hampshire Public Library Commission, 20 Park Street, Concord.
New Jersey Public Library Commission, State House Annex, Trenton.
New Mexico State Library Extension Service, Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fé.
New York Division of Adult Education and Library Extension, State Education Building, Albany.
North Carolina Library Commission, Agricultural Building, Raleigh.
North Dakota State Library Commission, Liberty Memorial Building, Bismarck.
Ohio State Library, State Office Building, Columbus.
Oklahoma Library Commission, Oklahoma City.
Oregon State Library, Salem.
Pennsylvania State Library, Educational Building, Harrisburg.
Rhode Island State Library, Providence.
South Carolina State Library Board, Care of Richland County Library, Columbia.
South Dakota Free Library Commission, State House Annex, Pierre.
Tennessee Library Division, Department of Education, Nashville.
Texas Library and Historical Commission, State Library, Austin.
Utah Library Division, Department of Public Instruction, Salt Lake City.
Vermont Free Public Library Commission, State Building, Montpelier.
Virginia State Library, Richmond.
Washington State Library, Temple of Justice, Olympia.
West Virginia Library Commission, office being set up at Charleston.
Wisconsin Free Library Commission, Madison.
Wyoming State Library, Cheyenne.

Note: Agencies are located either in the State capitol (or Statehouse) or in a State library building except as otherwise indicated.

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WHEN THIS PUBLICATION WAS LAST PRINTED

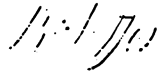
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<i>Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation</i>	MILO R. PERKINS, <i>President</i> .
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<i>Forest Service</i>	C. M. GRANGER, <i>Acting Chief</i> .
<i>Bureau of Home Economics</i>	LOUISE STANLEY, <i>Chief</i> .
<i>Library</i>	CLARIBEL R. BARNETT, <i>Librarian</i> .
<i>Division of Marketing and Marketing Agreements</i> .	MILO R. PERKINS, <i>In Charge</i> .
<i>Bureau of Plant Industry</i>	E. C. AUCHTER, <i>Chief</i> .
<i>Rural Electrification Administration</i>	HARRY SLATTERY, <i>Administrator</i> .
<i>Soil Conservation Service</i>	H. H. BENNETT, <i>Chief</i> .
<i>Sugar Division</i>	JOSHUA BERNHARDT, <i>Chief</i> .
<i>Weather Bureau</i>	FRANCIS W. REICHELDERFER, <i>Chief</i> .

Sir

Monticello May 19. 09.

Your favor of March 19 came to hand but a few days ago and informs me of the establishment of the Westward mill library society, of it's general views & progress, I always hear with pleasure of institutions for the promotion of knowledge among my countrymen. The people of every country are the only safe guardians of their own rights, and are the only instruments which can be used for their destruction. and certainly they would never consent to be so used were they not deceived. To avoid this they should be instructed to a certain degree. I have often thought that nothing would do more extensive good at small expence than the establishment of a small circulating library in every county to consist of a few well chosen books, to be lent to the people of the county under such regulations as would secure their safe return in due time. these should be such as would give them a general view of their history & particular views of that of their own country, a tolerable knowledge of geography, the elements of Natural philosophy of agriculture & mechanics. should your example lead to this, it will do great good. Men having had more favorable opportunities than falls to every man's lot of becoming acquainted with the best books on such subjects as might be selected, I do not know that I can be otherwise useful to your society, than by offering them any information respecting these which they might wish. my services in this way are freely at their command & I beg leave to tender to yourself my salutations & assurances of respect.

Mr. John Wyche



Facsimile of letter by Thomas Jefferson to John Wyche. The original letter is in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.